

# **THE INDIAN ARMY IN AFRICA AND ASIA, 1940-42: Implications for the Planning and Execution of Two Nearly-Simultaneous Campaigns**

A Monograph  
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Ordnance



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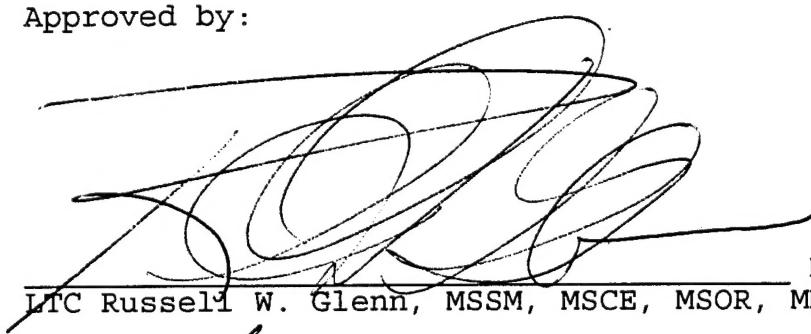
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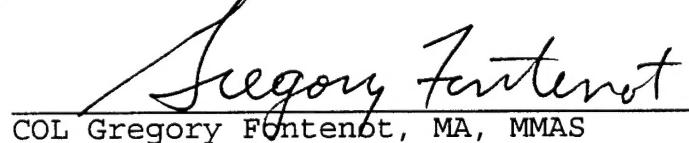
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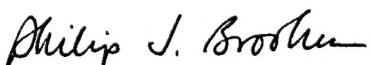
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## ABSTRACT

THE INDIAN ARMY IN AFRICA AND ASIA, 1940-42: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF TWO NEARLY-SIMULTANEOUS CAMPAIGNS by MAJ. James D. Scudieri, USA, 64 pages.

This monograph analyzes the Indian Army's experience in conducting nearly-simultaneous campaigns in Africa and Asia between 1940-42. The Indian Army planned to defend the famed North West Frontier (NWF) with Afghanistan as well as provide reinforcements to British units worldwide in accordance with peacetime agreements. The continued decline of Allied fortunes during the early war years necessitated greater British dependence on the Indian Army and the need to inaugurate a massive expansion while fighting one, then two, major regional conflicts (MRCs) in different parts of the world. The first MRC in the Near East went well; the second MRC in Asia was a disastrous failure.

The paper provides background on the composition of the Indian Army under the British Raj. It examines the state of peacetime campaign plans in 1919-39 with emphasis on specific scenarios, projected scope of operations, and overseas commitments. Rapid Axis successes necessitated greater involvement by Indian troops. The Indian Army doubled its commitment to Egypt and agreed to accept operational responsibility for the Near East: Iraq, Vichy French Syria, and Iran. In the midst of this heavy operational tempo, Japan attacked in December 1941. The monograph analyzes the conduct of these campaigns with respect to their similarity to extant campaign plans, the need to create crisis-action plans, and the ability to set the stage for tactical success. Appendices summarize the Indian Army's peacetime and wartime commitments.

The monograph emphasizes the operational "lessons learned" by the Indian Army and their ramifications for future American conduct of two major regional contingencies (MRCs). The case study underlines the importance of deploying truly joint forces in times of significant financial constraints, when the services may not merely complement but substitute for one another. The analysis recommends that campaign planning should take careful account of force composition with respect to active and reserve component (RC) units, along with other operational issues. The study concludes that current U.S. Army versatility as practiced places excessive emphasis upon the transition between war and Operations Other Than War (OOTW) to the detriment of preparation for all weather and terrain environments as specified in FM 100-5, Operations.

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Mr. P. Beaven, Army Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, wrote a response which was a source in and of itself. He sent me lists of potentially-helpful World War II papers in the MoD from the collection of the Public Record Office (PRO). He also gave me extracts of a priceless index of documents in the old India Office Library, now a department of The British Museum. When I selected certain MoD documents for perusal, he selflessly insured that copies reached me in a timely manner and at no cost.

Unknown individuals at the India Office Library and Records Department of The British Library answered my initial inquiry in record time. I received thirteen rolls of microfilm within a couple of months.

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21 April 1995

## INTRODUCTION

Scope and Context

The Indian Army's World War II campaigns are virtually unknown in the U.S. Yet its experience in the 1930s-40s is analogous to that of U.S. forces in the 1990s. After World War I, the Indian Army had a multitude of missions but slender financial resources. The North West Frontier (NWF) was a continuing drain in Operations Other Than War (OOTW). Tensions there could easily escalate to war. For example, the Third Afghan War and operations in Waziristan occupied the army between 1919-21. The inter-war period also witnessed a deterioration in domestic tranquility which necessitated increased support for internal security.

C-in-C, India understood the additional Indian Army role as the British Empire's strategic reserve. He functioned much like a current American CINC. He evaluated threats and allocated forces. Campaign plans supported his vision.

The outbreak of World War II necessitated immediate Indian Army commitment. German successes in France and the Low Countries soon threatened the British Isles with invasion. The areas of responsibility thrust upon C-in-C, India thus grew. Heavy and ever-increasing troop commitments were required for Egypt to counter the Italian threat from Libya. The Indian Army also assumed responsibility for campaigns against Italian Abyssinia (Ethiopia and Eritrea), Somaliland (Somalia), Iraq, Vichy French Syria, and Iran. The Near East thus became the

Indian Army's first major regional conflict (MRC). India also provided garrisons to Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore. These locations were important to the maintenance of command of the sea in the Indian Ocean which in turn secured India.

The threat of war in the Pacific loomed ever more imminent by late 1941. Yet commanders and staff assessed the chances for war in Burma as remote. They were preoccupied with the NWF and the Near East. The entrance of Japan into the war stretched Indian Army resources beyond its capabilities. The British Empire's Pacific possessions suddenly constituted a second MRC which demanded immediate reinforcement despite the heavy Near East commitment. Moreover, the army had barely begun either mobilization or modernization, especially with regard to mechanization.

This monograph will first examine the planning realities of the inter-war period and compare Indian Army peacetime plans with wartime contingencies, particularly with emphasis on how the former influenced the latter. This paper will then discuss tactics in two respects: the extent to which they may explain splendid successes in Africa and the dismal performance in Asia during the early war years, and the influence of operational plans on those tactics. In other words, how did operational plans set the stage for tactical success or failure?

The experience of the Indian Army between 1940-42 provides a case study in peacetime planning for force projection on multiple fronts despite severe budgetary

limitations, followed by the need to implement those plans in actual war. The study should provide insights for the current U.S. situation.

#### Background on the Old Indian Army

The origins of the Indian Army were the trading stations or "factories" founded by major European merchants and navigators in the seventeenth century. Conquests south of the River Sutlej by 1818 made the Honourable East India Company (HEIC) the preeminent power on the subcontinent. Parliamentary control expanded over this organization, which was clearly no longer a purely mercantile proposition.<sup>1</sup> By the 1857 Indian Mutiny, the HEIC's Indian troops numbered 226,418. British Army and other HEIC Europeans added another 39,751, less than 15 percent of the total.<sup>2</sup>

The suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny also precipitated the removal of the HEIC as a semi-political power and brought India under direct Crown control. Several threads of continuity originated with the inception of the formal British Raj: cost reductions, small army size, and threat assessment.

Since India was a poor country, taxes had to be commensurate with the national wealth. Military expenditure was expensive and hence a favored area for economy. In fact, many a veteran of Indian Service probably judges the British Parliament and the American Congress to be frivolous spenders in comparison.

The army therefore remained small compared to the days of "John Company" despite an expanding population. By 1922, it had 158,344 Indian troops, but British strength rose to 74,484 or nearly a third of the force.<sup>3</sup>

The next major policy focus was on potential enemies. Obviously, the army's primary mission was the defense of the Indian subcontinent. Multiple threats always loomed: internal troubles, the NWF tribes, Afghanistan, Persia, and Russia. Policy right up to the onset of World War II was to insure that Afghanistan never welcomed the Russians nor allowed them free passage.<sup>4</sup> A dominant Russia could sway a pliant Afghan ruler who in turn might facilitate an invasion which might seek common cause with India's internal troublemakers. Hence these possible threats were perceived as very much linked.<sup>5</sup> The "Great Game" continued unabated.<sup>6</sup>

The Indian Army was for most of its history built around the three Presidency armies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras. These proved to be remarkably resilient institutions defiant of reform or any efforts to diminish their independence. The Commander-in-Chief, India directly controlled the Bengal Army but wielded only partial control over its Bombay and Madras counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the army had no formal, peacetime divisional structure between 1889-1903. An 1895 amalgamation of the three separate Presidency Armies into a single Indian Army lacked teeth; all regiments maintained their old designations which preserved the three armies'

distinct identification in effect.<sup>8</sup> Division of supervision continued until 1903.

The assumption of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener as C-in-C, India on 28 November 1902 marked the heyday of reorganization in preparation for major war. Upon his appointment, Kitchener sought advice on his new posting. His experience had been with the reconstituted Egyptian Army, which he had led in the reconquest of the Sudan between 1898-99. After discussions with Gen. Sir William Birdwood, an officer who had served in both armies, Kitchener responded:

I see. You really have no Indian Army with esprit de corps as such. You have a number of small armies . . . each probably thinking itself superior to the rest.<sup>9</sup>

Kitchener's reorganization of 1903 therefore abolished all of the old regimental numbering systems which in effect had perpetuated the maintenance of three Presidency armies.<sup>10</sup>

More significantly, Kitchener reprioritized the army's missions. The police had primacy for domestic order with the military available as backup. He focused on the external threats, specifically the NWF, and wanted continuity between peacetime and wartime formations. He established nine permanent divisions in 1904-5. Deployment in two echelons covered the two likely enemy avenues of approach.<sup>11</sup> Kitchener was adamant that field army commanders must focus on training with small, mobile staffs. He further believed that the time had arrived to forget the Mutiny. He ended the practice of arming Indian troops with

an obsolete rifle as compared to British force weapons. He organized divisions with one brigade of British troops and two brigades of Indians. Finally, he established the Staff College at Quetta which functioned like Camberley.<sup>12</sup>

Kitchener's accomplishments were extraordinary. His reorganization of the Indian Army at the turn of the century insured its ability to respond to England's call for help in 1914. The reforms were not problem free. The army's administrative and logistic apparatus was inadequate for far-flung operations away from India's shores. Kitchener is to blame for this shortcoming since he had insisted on slender field army HQ staffs. However, the system he created was designed to deal with foreign invasions and expeditions just over the border. He could not have divined the massive effort of the Great War requiring deployments to France, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Palestine.

#### The Experience of the Great War

World War I transformed the Indian Army in a manner which few could have predicted. Heretofore the army had maintained its nine divisions with an eye towards the Frontier tribes and the Russian bogey while also contributing small contingents to nineteenth-century British imperial expeditions.<sup>13</sup> The First World War witnessed the raising and deployment of over a million soldiers in support of the British Empire. The army numbered only 155,000 in August 1914; by November 1918 the figure was 573,000.<sup>14</sup> The Meerut and Lahore Divisions went to France in October 1914

to assist a hard-pressed British Expeditionary Force (BEF) of five divisions. The French port of Marseilles had disembarked no less than 68 Indian infantry battalions and 21 cavalry regiments with 204 guns by the end of the year.<sup>15</sup>

Indian troops also served in Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, East Africa, Salonika, Persia, Aden, Kurdistan, and North China. Mesopotamia was the principal theater for Indian Army operations during the Great War. Total combatants who fought there numbered 675,000 with 144,000 in Egypt and 138,000 in France.<sup>16</sup> The total of Indian combatants who rotated overseas at some point during hostilities numbered 1,096,013.<sup>17</sup>

The strain of organizing a major expansion in the midst of high-intensity combat operations meant that little true increase in size occurred until 1916. The system of reserves and training were inadequate to deal with a large, short-term burgeoning in manpower. The army was still growing at war's end. The provision for officers had been the most acute personnel issue.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

##### Defense Policy

Perhaps the most pressing issue to emerge from the Great War was the ambiguous position of India and her army in the imperial scheme.<sup>19</sup> The dramatic growth of an incipient Indian nationalism underlined the requirement to articulate a clear Indian defense policy. The Indian Legislative

Assembly announced on 28 March 1921 that the role and mission of India's armed forces were defense against external aggression and internal security. Both the Viceroy and His Majesty's Government (HMG) in London endorsed the proclamation.

Reality dictated otherwise. Both Britain and India were mutually dependent upon one another. Both distrusted Bolshevized Russia. The Indian Army required British Army assistance to counter the perceived Russian threat via Afghanistan. Britain was also the source of a much-needed modernization. The British in turn needed help to protect their increasingly important acquisitions in the Middle East, possessions which arguably contributed greatly to securing India's western defenses.

The Government of India maintained its primary focus on the famed North West Frontier.<sup>20</sup> The Viceroy also agreed to contribute military forces to help secure Iraq, the Persian oil fields, and Singapore. These locations were deemed critical to India's overall defensive posture and British strategic concerns.

Military planners now had to calculate how to accomplish this multitude of missions in an atmosphere of financial and material austerity. The annual budget dropped from 48 to 42 million in 1923. Further cuts came in the 1930s. The Chatfield Committee of 1938-39 determined that modernization alone required 33 million--nearly the entire annual defense budget.<sup>21</sup> Such princely sums were never forthcoming.

Campaign Plans, 1919-39

Campaign plans during the 1920s-30s fell into three broad categories. Potential operations in Afghanistan had primacy. Troop commitments to fulfill pledges to His Majesty's Government ranked second in importance. The army also responded to unexpected contingencies as requested.

The first category may be dealt with briefly. HQ, Army in India focused its planning efforts on campaigning in Afghanistan. Courses of action addressed Russian aggression, tribal unrest, or internal Afghan turmoil.<sup>22</sup> The modern reader must bear in mind that the British leadership of India maintained an Indian rather than an imperial British mindset. Paltry budgets, a small force, virtually no equipment to support modernization, and tradition all encouraged a local focus.<sup>23</sup> Planners continued to allocate virtually the entire Indian Army for Frontier operations through 1939.<sup>24</sup>

The active army structure established in March 1937 facilitated this deployment. The Regular Forces consisted of three elements. The Covering Troops, the equivalent of about three divisions, permanently garrisoned the North West Frontier to contain outbreaks of tribal violence. The Field Army, four infantry divisions and four cavalry brigades, had the mission of defending India against an Afghan invasion as well as to provide reinforcements to either the Covering Troops or the Internal Security Troops. The Field Army needed a month to mobilize three of both the infantry

divisions and cavalry brigades and another two months for the rest. The Internal Security Troops were tasked to assist the civil authority in maintaining law and order. These troops numbered forty-three infantry battalions and seven cavalry regiments.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, international events prevented a return to peacetime normalcy after the Armistice. The 1919 Third Afghan War and subsequent operations against the formidable tribes in Waziristan dragged on for two years and tied down considerable British and Indian military resources.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, garrisons continued to occupy Egypt and Turkey until 1922, Palestine till 1923, and Mesopotamia till 1928.<sup>27</sup> These manpower requirements were considerable: nine infantry battalions in Egypt, seven in Palestine, and ten in Mesopotamia. Revolt in the last area drew in nineteen additional battalions in August 1920. Black Sea locales took six more in the 1920s.<sup>28</sup>

Further contingencies arose in Shanghai in 1926 and Burma in 1931. When Italy finally completed the rout of the Abyssinian forces loyal to Haile Selassie in 1936, the capital of Addis Ababa degenerated into pure mayhem. The Sikh infantry company from the 5/14th Punjabis maintained order in the city and protected the foreign legations until the arrival of Italian forces.<sup>29</sup>

Planning for these missions was essentially an exercise in crisis management. Staffs received very little notice.

They gathered whatever units were available and sent them on their way. Force packages were small.

Domestic turmoil also demanded attention. The army became heavily involved in internal security throughout the period of these unexpected overseas deployments. The non-cooperation campaign of Mahatma Gandhi began in 1921; troops played a major role in containing it. The army naturally disliked such duty as much as the agitators resented the military's intervention which demonstrated continued loyalty to the Raj and apolitical attitudes. Both sides had painful memories of the Amritsar Massacre.<sup>30</sup> The army also assisted in the suppression of local uprisings and control over the violence among disparate elements of the population, e.g. Hindu versus Moslem and Shia against Sunni.<sup>31</sup> The cost of these internal security operations served to drain already-strained budgets: For example, the police forces added 5,000 personnel in the years 1926-32 alone.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to unforeseen foreign and domestic contingencies, the Indian Army had to fulfill pledges to Britain to provide troops to secure other possessions. Planners had to allocate increasing numbers of trained troops to honor these commitments.

The end of the rebellion in Mesopotamia (Iraq) brought only temporary relief. Defense assistance became a standing tasking for one infantry division and a cavalry brigade in 1922, a requirement which increased to two divisions in 1925. In February 1929, the Persian oilfields received a

battalion; this modest outlay expanded to a whole division in 1931. Singapore was to get one division less one brigade.<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, the year 1932 inaugurated a debate between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government over the precise role of India in imperial defense. The former was keen to restrict overseas obligations to a single division. Yet in response to war rumblings in Europe, the Army in India produced the colloquially-titled 1935-plan which committed a total of five brigades.<sup>34</sup>

By early 1937, India agreed to provide one infantry brigade, an artillery brigade, and ancillary troops to the Persian oilfields; one brigade with ancillaries to Singapore; two battalions for Hong Kong; two brigades with supporting troops for Egypt; and one brigade for Burma. The Persian oilfields and Singapore became short-notice contingencies; Burma, Egypt, and Hong Kong carried reasonable warning provisos. Fulfillment was contingent upon the situation in India at the time.<sup>35</sup>

Planners dusted off the 1935-plan and reprioritized certain other contingency plans. Scheme M signified Singapore; Scheme R, Burma; Scheme P, Iran; and Scheme E, Egypt, which also included Scheme A for Aden. Scheme E for Egypt moved from last to first priority; it required movement within twenty-four days for service in Egypt or Palestine. Officials renamed the schemes in 1938 for security reasons. Scheme E was now HERON; Scheme A, HAWK.

Schemes M, P, and R became respectively EMU, SPARROW, and WREN.<sup>36</sup>

Several concerns remained. The 1937 agreements did not specify whether these demands replaced or were in addition to previous obligations. For example, Iraq figured prominently in pre-1932 British requests for Indian troops, yet now received no troop allocation. Whether this omission was deliberate was not entirely clear. Only the German occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938 prompted a definitive request from Britain for two brigades and a divisional HQ to deploy to Egypt. The movement order came on 1 October. The infamous Munich Agreement resulted in a cancellation order on 3 October.<sup>37</sup>

The ongoing political debates at strategic level between the British and Indian governments further clouded issues. The Indian General Staff was hard pressed to formulate plans for contingencies in the midst of acrimony and unclear missions. For example, British politicians and their Chiefs of Staff Committee had to agree upon which overseas possessions would fall under C-in-C, India, who otherwise would be merely a supporting CINC tasked to provide troops from his slender pool of trained men. If he did become responsible for additional areas worldwide, the Indian General Staff needed to complete detailed operational plans and provide guidance to tactical commanders on the ground. There was also considerable debate by 1936 over the cost of

the Indian Army's modernization and who would bear the "abnormal expenditure."<sup>38</sup>

Overseas deployments further posed the potential of fighting a first-class, well-equipped foe. Indian Army planners had assumed that they would face only second-class opponents. Such an assumption was necessary given the limited inter-war period army modernization.

#### Inter-war Modernization Issues

By 1939 the pace of modernization was still woefully inadequate. The standard British World War II Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) for lorried infantry authorized one light machine gun (LMG) and one submachine gun (SMG) per section; one 2-inch mortar per platoon; and six 3-inch mortars as part of the support assets at battalion. Medium machine gun (MMG) support came from a machine gun battalion assigned as division troops.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, the Indian Army infantry of the 1930s was "rifle and grenade troops." The battalion did have eight MMG, but that quantity compared unfavorably to twelve in a British battalion, and Indian MMG were mule-packed rather than motorized. The under-equipped sepoys also had no mortars. The machine gun section deployed a solitary LMG for an entire platoon, a Lewis gun of WW I vintage.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, this basis of allocation of LMGs, which was the same for both Indian infantry and British battalions on the Indian establishment, was one-third of the number issued

to units late in World War I, 1917-18.<sup>41</sup> Peacetime parsimony bit deeply.

The cavalry were no better off. The overwhelming majority were still horse-mounted. Only two regiments of the famed Indian cavalry had mechanized by 1937, the Scinde Horse and the 13th Lancers, and this mechanization was in fact partial.<sup>42</sup> Each regiment contained one squadron of light tanks and two squadrons of armored cars.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps the most glaring gap in the Indian Army's modernization program was in technical personnel. Motorization and mechanization necessitated the recruitment and training of proficient mechanics and signallers virtually from scratch. One evaluation has in fact cited a conscious decision by the army's leadership to slow the pace of modernization in combat units in order to keep pace with the slower build up of an efficient maintenance and repair organization.<sup>44</sup>

Leaders understood these modernization shortcomings. Brutally-realistic and bitter assessments of the Indian Army ranked its readiness below the British-subsidized Afghan, Egyptian, and Iraqi forces!<sup>45</sup> The lack of antitank (AT) and antiaircraft (AA) weapons was especially chronic.

Finally, Indian responsibility for overseas operations did not result in a larger army. These additional troop requirements were taken "out of hide." Thus, planners had to divert internal-security units or those earmarked for guarding the ever-turbulent NWF.

A separate but sensitive issue within the army during the inter-war period was the gradual Indianization of the officer corps. Many old-hand British officers of the Indian Army opposed such a program and would have declined to serve under Indian officers. Yet Indianization of the officer corps was a true barometer of British intent to prepare India for independence. Progress was along the proverbial long, hard road. British officials selected eight units for total Indianization in 1922. This method would have largely segregated British and Indian officers into different units.

Through WW I, the only Indian officers were Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs). They bore rank titles similar to company-grade officers, but only Indian soldiers had to render salutes. They were an important link between the enlisted men and their British officers. There was and is no equivalent in other armies. The British considered the VCOs to be a type of warrant officer.<sup>46</sup>

At the end of the Great War, ten Indian cadets became a standard annual quota at Sandhurst. This concession had good intentions, but results were decidedly mixed. Between 1918-26, 85 cadets attended but 25 failed the course, some 30 percent. By 1926 there were forty-six graduates known as King Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) on active duty. Even a 100-percent graduation rate would have produced too few Indian officers. Consequently, the Indian Military Academy was founded at Dehra Dun and began operations on 10 December 1932 with a yearly intake of eighty cadets.<sup>47</sup> The

course lasted 2 1/2 years, a year longer than Sandhurst. The demands of WW II would shorten the course to eighteen months. Graduates were Indian Commissioned Officers (ICOs) equivalent to British subalterns. By 1939 there were about six hundred KCIOs and ICOs.<sup>48</sup>

Indian officers endured the usual trials of pioneers breaking into a heretofore largely segregated organization. British and Indian officers acknowledged the existence of discrimination. However, they also believed that they could accomplish change within the system.<sup>49</sup> In January 1934 the first Indian was commissioned from the ranks.<sup>50</sup>

The approach of war painfully highlighted these shortcomings. On 1 August 1939, 12th Indian Infantry Brigade left for Malaya. On 3 August, 11th Indian Infantry Brigade departed for Egypt; 5th Indian Infantry Brigade followed on 23 September with a divisional HQ. Two battalions went to Aden, a mountain battery to East Africa, and four mule companies to France.<sup>51</sup> In order to insure these troops were capable of engaging first-class opponents, the Indian Army virtually stripped itself of the limited fruits of a tardy, inadequate modernization program.

The Chatfield Committee specified upgraded TO&Es for all units. Insufficient numbers of armored cars and tanks existed to mechanize all Indian cavalry. However, they would now turn in their horses and become Indian Cavalry Motor Regiments. The three squadrons each deployed three troops. A troop broke down into three sections, each in a

15 cwt. truck and armed with a LMG. The regiment boasted a total of 109 wheeled vehicles and nine 2-inch mortars.<sup>52</sup> An infantry battalion now received four 2-inch mortars. The separate LMG section disappeared since the weapon became a standard section base of fire with a total of forty-five in the battalion. Vickers Berthier weapons replaced the Lewis guns until fielding of the superior Bren. Further modified TO&Es existed for battalions embarking overseas, i.e. the "External Defence Troops." Allocations rose from forty-five to fifty LMGs; six to twenty-two AT rifles; four to twelve 2-inch mortars; and none to two 3-inch mortars. The carrier platoon received ten tracked vehicles in lieu of trucks.<sup>53</sup> Total motor vehicles grew from forty-eight to sixty-five.<sup>54</sup>

Such reorganizations and reequipping were essential to make these units on a par with potential enemies. However, Indian Army cupboards were virtually bare. Britain's rearmament program was unable to fill its own British Army requirements. Yet the demands for more trained and well-equipped men had in fact only just begun.

#### THE WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE

##### Africa, 1940-41

The outbreak of war in 1939 split the Indian General Staff's focus. The Interim Plan and 1940 Defence Plan A dealt with operations on the North West Frontier and Afghanistan. Russia was still suspect and Axis agents were

feared active in the area.<sup>55</sup> In September 1940, Frontier defense obligated sixty infantry battalions.<sup>56</sup>

However, India's increasing overseas commitment was a belated recognition how her strategic concerns had broadened beyond the NWF. Airpower required her defense to begin on the airfields of Iran and Iraq.<sup>57</sup> Coordination of strategy with Britain remained a significant challenge.

The collapse of France in June 1940 made Britain's strategic position appear desperate if not outright untenable. The home country girded itself for a German invasion. Losses on the European Continent had been heavy. The BEF had evacuated without any heavy equipment. Few replacements were immediately available. Existing formations were understrength and ill-equipped. The shortage of rifles was so acute that India sent emergency shipments from her limited reserve stocks.<sup>58</sup>

The strategic Middle East was in dire straits too. First, the British Middle East Command (MEC) was a large, daunting operational responsibility with weak garrisons scattered throughout the area of operations. It encompassed the Middle East, Near East, North Africa, and part of sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>59</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell also had responsibility for any operations in Greece, Crete, the Balkans, and Turkey. Second, Italy maintained two field armies in Libya which totaled some quarter million men in fourteen division equivalents.<sup>60</sup> The fall of France permitted Italy to concentrate against Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

In the interest of simplicity, the two C-in-Cs, India and Middle East, divided the area of operations. C-in-C, India assumed operational control over Iran, Iraq, and Syria while C-in-C, Middle East essentially took the African continent.<sup>62</sup> C-in-C, India (Gen. Sir Robert Cassels) offered on 25 October 1939 to send two additional brigades to Iraq and the oilfields in addition to the one originally committed. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) in London, Field Marshal Sir Edmund Ironside, personally acknowledged this generous assistance on 9 March 1940. He asked Cassels to send all three brigades at once if the need arose, even though the Indian Army required some five to six months to raise new units to replace them.<sup>63</sup> Cassels was also responsible for establishing base staff and lines of communication (LOC) personnel in Iraq.<sup>64</sup>

This division of responsibilities between mid-1940 and mid-1942 made the Near East the Indian Army's first MRC. General HQ, India viewed Basra and the oilfields as the most important objectives for defense; indeed, Basra was seen as potentially the only friendly regional port if the Axis overran Egypt. Gen. Sir Claude J. E. Auchinleck, Cassel's successor, was particularly concerned over Basra between January-July 1941. This Delhi focus on the Near East continued until late 1942 when Soviet collapse was no longer likely.<sup>65</sup>

India first had to support C-in-C, Middle East based on past agreements. Operation COMPASS, originally envisioned as

a five-day raid, ran from December 1940 to February 1941 and pushed the Italians out of both Egypt and half of Libya.

The 4th Indian Division represented almost the entire infantry element. It was a superb formation, composed largely of peacetime professionals. Two of its brigades had been in the desert for well over a year. The 16th British Brigade became its third brigade for the operation. All had had plenty of time to conduct desert training. They received a full British division's complement of machine-gun and artillery units as well as the Matilda II infantry tanks of 7RTR as attachments.<sup>66</sup> The Indian troops were thus thoroughly acclimatized and well versed in combined arms prior to the attack.

The offensive showed how a theater commander could set the operational conditions for tactical success to the profit of Lt. Gen. Richard O'Connor. Wavell also insured that O'Connor had the best support available from his fellow service CINCs in the Royal Navy and RAF, no mean feat given the absence of a joint HQ.<sup>67</sup> In spite of the imposing numerical odds which faced them, both Wavell and O'Connor demonstrated the vision to formulate a wartime contingency plan with options for stunning success. They prepared to extend the campaign with a ruthless pursuit if the opportunity arose.

Wavell had to drop a thunderbolt on O'Connor, however. The hapless soldiers of 4th Indian Division could not participate in the campaign beyond the initial raiding

operations as they were needed to salvage the situation in East Africa. This sudden removal of O'Connor's major infantry formation delayed pursuit; 7th Armoured Division lacked the necessary infantry support to continue attacking the Italian defensive positions. He was thus unable to launch a hasty attack which might have taken Bardia before the Italian defense coalesced. Had O'Connor known, he might have positioned the 16th British Brigade to better advantage.<sup>68</sup> The 6th Australian Division would replace the Indian troops, but these tough Dominion soldiers had no combat experience, no transport, and only two regiments of WW I-vintage guns.<sup>69</sup>

East Africa was a much tougher nut to crack. The Italians fought with much greater determination than in the Western Desert. The terrain was rugged and the sepoy's mountain warfare skills had diminished after months in the desert. The 4th and 5th Indian Divisions fought with South Africans, East Africans, West Africans, and Sudanese. They ejected the Italians from British Somaliland and their small toehold in the Sudan and then conquered Eritrea, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), and Italian Somaliland. They then conducted multiple OOTW missions pending the reestablishment of civil authority, in particular the restoration of Haile Selassie. In essence, they dissolved the Italian East African Empire within the five months between January-May 1941.

The region was another logisticians' nightmare run on the now-familiar shoe-string. Wavell lacked the assets to

provide proper operational sustainment. Indian troops filled the void. Indian engineers functioned as railroad troops. They restored the narrow-gauge rail line and converted light trucks into engines. Drivers of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC) sustained both tactical and operational logistics, running day and night some 120 miles one-way. Their trucks provided routine resupply, stockpiling, and onward movement of reinforcements and replacements in theater.<sup>70</sup>

This singular achievement was no mere British penchant for sideshow campaigns. Wavell had a clear strategic objective. Italian naval forces operating out of Massawa, however feeble in numbers and combat power, had rendered the Red Sea an area of hostilities under international law. Neutral American shipping could now proceed legally and unhindered, unlike in the Mediterranean.

Success in East Africa came none too soon. C-in-C, India's recently-acquired MRC in Iraq, Syria, and Iran exploded. Cassels had criticized the plans drafted in 1939-40: SABINE and SYBIL allocated three divisions with numerous mobile troops with initial entry by one division to establish a base at Basra. Cassels had argued that the plans were not practical and lacked clear, definitive guidance to tactical commanders. He had been particularly concerned with Indian units' poverty in AA assets. Auchinleck worked out a compromise with Wavell and the

Chiefs of Staff in London. All parties contributed forces but the tactical commander remained under C-in-C, India.<sup>71</sup>

Perceived Axis machinations and internal coups prompted intervention in Iraq between April-May 1941, Syria between June-July 1941, and Iran in August-September 1941. The 8th and 10th Indian Infantry Divisions overran Iraq and Iran quickly, but garrison duties seemed interminable and absorbed increasing numbers of men.<sup>72</sup> Indian participation in Syria rested with a single brigade from 4th Indian Division until the 8th Indian Division could move from Iraq.

Battles in the Western Desert to support British forces in Egypt, the campaign in East Africa, and the Indian Army's MRC in the Near East caused minimal casualties by World War II standards, but they occupied large numbers of Indian troops. Operations in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Iran tied down seven divisions during 1941-42: the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Indian Infantry Divisions.<sup>73</sup> Both the 4th and 5th also served as garrisons on Cyprus. Peacetime planning had never envisioned such large-scale overseas deployments for prolonged periods.

The Indian Army's peacetime structure could not have supported such an effort. India had maintained only two standing infantry divisions during the interwar period, the 1st and 3rd, usually known as Rawalpindi and Meerut District troops.<sup>74</sup> The rest of the Indian Army was a collection of battalions and brigades.<sup>75</sup>

India was only able to respond to these crises because she surpassed her 1940 and 1941 army expansion plan goals of five infantry divisions in each year.<sup>76</sup> The country fielded the 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Infantry Divisions in 1940. The next year inaugurated six more: 6th, 10th, 14th, 17th, 19th, and 34th Infantry Divisions, along with 32nd Armoured Division. The 4th and 5th Indian Divisions functioned as imperial "fire brigades" in North and East Africa. The 6th, 8th, and 10th Infantry Divisions fought the Near Eastern campaigns. Furthermore, officials stood up 2nd Infantry Division in 1942 from units in Iraq and 12th Infantry Division from troops in Iran in 1943.<sup>77</sup>

Early actions demonstrated that 4th Indian Division was certainly the premier organization of the Indian Army. It participated in COMPASS as a finely-honed fighting machine since campaign planners provided the time to develop tactical expertise. Its repertoire included the use of fortifications, mobile defense, and offensive-defensive operations. Personnel were confident in their all-round efficiency and flexibility to meet any contingency. Central India Horse, the Divisional Cavalry Regiment, learned the use of "Jock Columns," a mobile, combined-arms formation, from the British 11th Hussars.<sup>78</sup> The 5th Indian Division, generally speaking, was a close second.

Yet such a rapid expansion did not come without a price, and succeeding divisions bore the cost. The 10th Indian Division deployed to Iraq hurriedly. The lack of fighting

there was fortunate; the division had inadequate training and insufficient equipment. Most new formations were lamentably deficient in AT guns, AA artillery, and armored vehicles.<sup>79</sup> For example, the 1940 divisions contained only 36 percent of their authorized artillery, 19 percent of the LMGs, and 11 percent of the mortars.<sup>80</sup>

One especially damaging practice was "milking." Existing units had to transfer many of their pre-war, highly-trained, professional veterans to act as cadre to new formations. Regiments endured the process repeatedly. The hapless infantry battalions suffered twice within eighteen months.<sup>81</sup> This dilution in quality of original formations was devastating. The war-raised divisions now needed time to train and assimilate their fresh recruits. Instead, another front erupted. The war now came to India's borders.

#### Asia, 1941-42

When Japan went to war with the British Empire in December 1941, India had already committed both her superbly-trained peacetime army as well as those newly-raised units of 1940-41 to which she could provide at least a modicum of modern equipment. She would now have to continue the expansion well beyond even that of World War I in order to fight the Japanese Empire. The challenge was not the limits of Indian manpower; numbers were never an issue. The problem was a strategic one based on a decision to limit the army's recruiting base.

Recruiting practices favored the "fighting races of Northern India" which facilitated the maintenance of a quality, apolitical standing army.<sup>82</sup> Recruiters could afford to be choosy in a volunteer army amongst a culture which honored faithful military service as a respectful profession. The preference for the martial races reinforced an overall policy of favoring groups with established reputations for fighting ability and loyalty, e.g. Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Punjabi Mussulmans [Muslims].

Thus, while the Punjab/NWF areas contributed less than 10 percent of the men in 1856-57, this figure rose to 58.5 percent in 1930. The famed riflemen from Nepal, Garhwal, and Kumaon formed less than 1 percent of the army in 1856-57; by 1930 their share was 22 percent. Conversely, Utter Pradesh and Bihar in central and southern India had donated 90 percent of the ranks in 1856-57. In 1905 the figure was down to 22 percent; by 1930 their representation was virtually nil.<sup>83</sup>

Officials also remembered that the 1857 Mutiny had been largely a Bengal Army affair. Hence, Bengalis, as well as high-caste Brahmins, were considered unsuitable soldierly material. The combination of the preference for the martial races and the exclusion of the castes associated with the Mutiny greatly narrowed the recruiting pool.

The Indian Army's official history referred to this policy as a "major obstacle to rapid and orderly expansion" with good reason.<sup>84</sup> Indian Army regiments had a

heterogeneous organization. Infantry battalions consisted of four segregated companies composed of different martial races. Efficient personnel replacement was difficult at best. Given caste sensibilities regarding diet, supply operations were a major logistical feat.<sup>85</sup>

There were also not enough British officers to support the expansion. Service in the Indian Army was rather different than in the British Army. One preeminent qualification was bilingual capability. The language of command in the Indian Army was Urdu, not English. British officers were required to be fluent in both.<sup>86</sup> Hence, the prospective Indian Army officer generally started his career in a British regiment posted to India where he served an apprenticeship of sorts for a year. He learned the language and about the country, its people, and their customs.<sup>87</sup>

Meaningful officer communication with Indian troops was critical for morale, esprit de corps, and unit effectiveness. Most soldiers came from India's yeomen farmer classes. Their loyalty was generally not to a nation state nor to the King-Emperor, but rather to their officers. Symbolic of this relationship was the diminutive the officers used to call their men, jawan, meaning "lad."<sup>88</sup> The development of such special comraderie took time and India was out of time in December 1941. Expansion was so rapid that it disrupted this painstaking, patient cultivation of a British officer class specially suited to

lead Indian Army formations.<sup>89</sup> There was no real solution to the problem.

The importance of VCOs correspondingly increased as a consequence. One course of action was the far more rapid Indianization of the officer corps. Even this process could proceed only so far given the very high "washout" rates of prospective Indian officers. Provincial Selection Boards alone rejected 50-65 percent of applicants; the GHQ Officer Selection Board dropped nearly 75 percent of the remainder. The right officer material was not forthcoming in the desired numbers.<sup>90</sup> The army was perhaps feeling the ill effects of the political agitation at home. Many well-educated Indians tended to be politically active and not inclined to seek a commission.

The Indian Army continued expansion in 1942. Officials raised no less than seven additional formations: the 2nd, 20th, 23rd, 25th, 26th, 36th, and the 39th Infantry Divisions. These units were completely raw; all but the 2nd eventually served in Burma.<sup>91</sup>

While in the midst of such personnel turmoil and incomplete modernization, Indian Army planners were confronted with a new crisis. Pre-war plans for the Pacific were few and not comprehensive beyond the provision of reinforcements for Hong Kong, Singapore, and Burma.<sup>92</sup> In 1941, General Staff, India was focused on the C-in-C's Near Eastern MRC.<sup>93</sup> British diplomacy was expected to buy time

in the Pacific.<sup>94</sup> Such an assumption replaced the Anglo-Japanese rapprochement earlier in the century.

Other planning assumptions were more alarming still. India's Pacific defense was heavily dependent upon British help, especially the vaunted Royal Navy. However, the precarious state of Britain's naval situation in Europe and the Mediterranean precluded the despatch of powerful battle squadrons to the Pacific as originally planned. Every available ship was needed to counter the Kriegsmarine and Regia Navale. Indeed, naval intelligence analysts had been working mostly non-Japanese cyphers since 1937 in support of these priorities.<sup>95</sup> The RAF was expected to fill the vacuum. Unfortunately, sufficient numbers of modern aircraft were not forthcoming either.

The first victim was Hong Kong. Strategic planners in London concluded that the defense would be little more than a denial operation.<sup>96</sup> The GOC instead attempted a more prolonged defense.<sup>97</sup> The Japanese still triumphed within eighteen days, 8-26 December 1941. Two Indian battalions entered captivity, the 2/14 Punjabis and 5/7 Rajputs.

Malaya and Singapore were next. Flawed assumptions unhinged the defense to such an extent that the British never recovered. Most planners originally expected the primary threat to come from the sea, i.e. from the south. Significantly, three successive General Officers Commanding (GOCs), Malaya had quickly identified suitable east-coast amphibious landing sites in both Malaya and Siam (Thailand)

to the north, and the lamentable lack of defensive preparations. Army HQ, India also reported to Maj. Gen. H. R. Pownall, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence in London, on 6 January 1939 that an exercise at the Quetta Staff College further indicated that such an attack "may constitute a major danger to the Fortress."<sup>98</sup> Operation MATADOR therefore called for an early offensive to dominate the projected landing beaches in Burma and Siam.<sup>99</sup>

However, political clearance to take such overt measures and violate Siamese neutrality prior to an actual Japanese invasion was refused. Awaiting an attack handed the enemy a tremendous operational advantage and invalidated the plan; there was no substitute. Moreover, local politicians rejected bellicose demonstrations which would alarm the civilian population. Business interests completely dominated the mindset of public officials; disruption of routine was not permissible. Shock was all the greater with the arrival of the Japanese.<sup>100</sup>

The Indian contribution to the Singapore defense was the 9th and 11th Infantry Divisions. Both were war formations raised in 1940. They fielded only two brigades each, which were partly trained, and that for fighting in the desert. The Japanese began amphibious landings on 8 December. By 31 January 1942, all British Empire forces had evacuated to Singapore Island. The garrison capitulated on 15 February. Over 80,000 troops were captured, the worst disaster in the

history of the British Empire. India lost two divisions in little more than as many months.

The present analysis has devoted little space to Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore since C-in-C, India did not control the forces there (though the defeats cost him fourteen battalions). He was responsible for the defense of Burma on India's eastern frontier. Success in Burma would secure the industrial and harbor complex at Calcutta.<sup>101</sup>

The First Burma Campaign also demonstrated how poor operational decisions were a precondition for tactical failure, both during planning and execution. This analysis will focus on three aspects: pre-war planning, the wartime relationship between operational and tactical actions, and the Sittang River disaster.

- Defense planning for Burma suffered from constant changes in command and control arrangements, but C-in-C, India was not to blame. Burma had seven different war planning HQs between June 1937 and January 1942. Five of these changes occurred within a period of sixteen months. India lost operational control in June 1937. The Colonial Office in London made Burma a separate colony with a view towards future independence. In September 1939, the Burmese Government retained administrative and financial control but defense came under the Chiefs of Staff in London. Operational authority switched to the newly-established Far East Command headquartered in Singapore in November 1940 with administrative jurisdiction the responsibility of

ministers in London. India again assumed the task of formulating Burma's defensive plans on 12 December 1941, only to lose it by the thirtieth to the short-lived Australian, British, Dutch, American Command (ABDACOM) operating from Java. Burma reverted to India's protection in January 1942.<sup>102</sup> India retained control to the end of the war.

Naturally, Burma's preparations for the trials ahead were poor given the constant change in senior headquarters. Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Hutton, Wavell's former chief of staff, took over command of III Indian Corps which was designated to defend Burma. He soon discovered that the organization also functioned as a local War Office, GHQ, and LOC Area with a huge administrative problem.<sup>103</sup> The civilian government and its most eminent European inhabitants also imitated their peers in Malaya. War scares and suitable preparations were not allowed to interfere with "hallowed custom." Hence, basic civil defense measures were virtually non-existent.<sup>104</sup> Military preparations were not much better off. The Royal Navy was fully occupied in European waters. The loss of the battleship Prince of Wales and battlecruiser Repulse on 10 December left Burma bereft of naval protection. The RAF could not fill the void. Finally, Malaya had first priority for British reinforcements.

These deficiencies had serious impact on the viability of land operations. The lack of air superiority and loss of command of the sea were bad enough. The pre-war assumption

that the RAF could substitute for a powerful navy meant that airfield locations rather than defensible terrain dictated army deployments.

In retrospect, campaign planners still appear to have performed poorly. They had specific information on Burma's infrastructure.<sup>105</sup> They correctly assessed Burma's garrison in October 1940 as barely adequate for internal security, let alone stopping a Japanese attack.<sup>106</sup> Details on Japanese troop strengths and locations were updated.<sup>107</sup> Yet they deemed the chances of an attack on Burma remote, even after the Japanese occupation of neighboring Siam.<sup>108</sup>

The operational planning tempo was also far too slow for the desperate situation at hand. Protection for the valuable oil refineries had simply been lumped together with the Rangoon port defenses until 1937. An independent defense plan for these refineries in 1939 then scheduled only two batteries of AA guns for installation in 1940.<sup>109</sup> Forces in Burma were satisfied that administrative units and services which had barely existed a year ago could gradually deploy to designated war positions as late as 15 November 1941.<sup>110</sup> The Japanese invasion was barely a month away.

The conduct of the campaign reflected the inadequacy of planning. When III Indian Corps, consisting of 17th Indian Division and 1st Burma Division, finally established itself to defend against the Japanese onslaught, the presence of only one Japanese language speaker hindered intelligence.<sup>111</sup> The air situation progressively worsened. Japanese air

strength rose from 150 planes in January 1941 to over 400 after the fall of Singapore in February 1942. Between 31 January-21 March 1942, Allied aircraft availability rose to 53 from 35, but then dropped to 42. Half of the Japanese Army Air Force pilots were veterans of China or the brief scrap against the USSR in 1939.<sup>112</sup>

Inimicable relations between operational and tactical commanders characterized the campaign. Wavell was the senior commander, both as C-in-C, India and as the head of the shortlived ABDACOM. This experienced veteran of the Middle East believed that his limited forces could not hold Burma, and Rangoon in particular, with defensive methods. He advocated early, vigorous counterattacks.<sup>113</sup> Wavell's reputation has suffered due to the perception that he declined the assistance of Chinese troops. Chiang Kai Shek offered two field armies, but neither the Burmese Government nor an overstretched Indian Army could provide the required logistical support. Wavell accepted the help of one division and one regiment immediately.<sup>114</sup>

Hutton was stuck in the proverbial middle as he also tried to deal with rapidly deteriorating civil services and an increasing refugee problem.<sup>115</sup> He understood Wavell's concern, but he sympathized with the plight of Maj. Gen. Sir John Smyth, commander of 17th Indian Division. Smyth and his staff wanted to concentrate the division and fight on ground of their choosing. A meeting of the three generals accomplished nothing other than to force Smyth to defend

forward with his troops scattered along the Bilin River, two brigades covering some 500-880 miles of jungle terrain. Smyth was sure that Wavell underestimated both the danger to Burma and Japanese capabilities. He also believed that Wavell's desire for sweeping counterattacks assumed that the Indian troops were of the same caliber as the already-famous 4th and 5th Indian Divisions. Smyth noted that they clearly were not; one brigade in particular was not yet ready for mechanized operations let alone jungle warfare.<sup>116</sup> This sad state of affairs came to a head with Smyth's decision to blow up the railway bridge over the Sittang River.

The fighting withdrawal was not going well. The action along the Bilin River hardly slowed the Japanese; no wonder as it was only some one hundred yards wide and fordable along virtually its entire length. Indian forces holding the Sittang bridge were far too weak. As a result they accomplished little in the way of a meaningful defense. Worse, 17th Indian Division failed to move unnecessary transport west of the river in case early demolition was necessary. When the Japanese appeared prepared to seize the bridge, Smyth ordered the bridge blown with two of his three brigades still on the east side of the river.<sup>117</sup>

The loss of the bridge and the river line sealed the fate of Rangoon and Burma. But the acrimony continued. Lt. Gen. Sir Harold Alexander arrived in Rangoon on 5 March to replace Hutton--who was expected to remain and be his chief of staff. Wavell sacked Smyth most unceremoniously.<sup>118</sup>

Perhaps the most damning comment of all was Slim's observation upon taking over command of the renamed Burma Corps. He stated that even by March 1942 no one had any idea of the objective of the campaign, whether to hold, delay, or counterattack. Worse, the troops knew that they were losing the campaign despite tactical successes.<sup>119</sup> His masterful withdrawal to India needs no comment here.

The First Burma Campaign demonstrated that the Indian Army's war effort had gone too far. The combination of erroneous, perhaps wishful, planning assumptions with the inexperience and poor training of the troops resulted in a humiliating retreat. The dual processes of expansion and modernization could barely cope with the demand for troops to support the British in North Africa and the Near East while also guarding the North West Frontier.<sup>120</sup> The Indian Army's second MRC was well beyond its capability.

#### ASSESSMENTS

##### Critique of Indian Army Operations

The dilemma of the Indian Army by 1942 was the result of strategic overextension on the part of the Government of India. In turn the Viceroy was trying to assist a similarly-stretched home government in Britain. When the Japanese threatened the entire imperial edifice in Asia, all three services in both the Indian and British establishments lacked the wherewithal to respond adequately.

Pre-war plans utterly failed to address such a scenario. They dealt almost exclusively with the NWF. Political realities, economic constraints, and past experience dictated such a focus.<sup>121</sup> The 1930s saw an increase in Indian Army commitments for overseas expeditions. These operations were small-scale, but time and distance precluded the preparation of detailed contingency plans.<sup>122</sup>

The actual course of the war unleashed an insatiable demand for more troops well beyond peacetime estimates. By mid-1940, the War Office in London requested the C-in-Cs for India and the Middle East to determine execution dates for contingency operations based on immediate troop delivery, regardless of the availability of equipment from the U.K.<sup>123</sup> The Indian Army was fortunate that its Near East MRC required little sustained fighting, but Japanese involvement proved to be a campaign too far.

Yet lack of resources is only a partial explanation. The Indian Army fiascoes in Malaya and Burma were tragic examples of operational commanders failing to set the conditions for tactical success. Planners seemingly had little sense of Japanese intent. This ignorance was not the result of an inability to read Japanese codes.<sup>124</sup>. They seriously underestimated the Imperial Japanese Empire as a first-class military power.

The excessive deficiencies in campaign plans for Malaya and Burma seriously hamstrung tactical commanders. For example, Operation MATADOR was a belated recognition that the

most dangerous Japanese threat against Malaya and Singapore would come from the north. There was no other suitable course of action when political leaders failed to approve it. Tactical commanders tried to implement a flawed peacetime campaign plan with disastrous consequences. The course of events which led to the Sittang River bridge disaster during the First Burma Campaign is an even better example. No peacetime plan existed. Wavell inherited this situation upon assuming his duties as C-in-C, India in March 1941. III Indian Corps was implementing a crisis-action plan in the midst of Japanese invasion.

Adequate appreciation of the Japanese threat would have made some difference. Withdrawal from the Near East and Mediterranean commitments was hardly an option, nor did completely stripping the North West Frontier appear to be an alternative. Half measures would have only made the Indian Army weak everywhere. General HQ of the Army in India, in conjunction with the Chiefs of Staff in the UK, chose to subordinate the Pacific. They were wrong.

Historians and commentators have heretofore placed undue emphasis on Japanese jungle-training. Japanese troops in truth possessed no such expertise. Japanese special staffs researched these potential battlefields, produced training briefs, and conducted unit training exercises within a scant six months.<sup>125</sup> Their operational planners thus set the stage for tactical success. Conversely, Indian Army training focused on mountain warfare and arid desert

operations based on early-war experiences. Jungle warfare hardly entered the lexicon of the Indian Army before 1942.

Indian troops were more than equal to fighting any Axis power. They defeated the Italians in the Western Desert and their more determined cousins in Eritrea between 1940-41. The mid-1942 battles in the Western Desert showed the world that sepoys could hold their own against the vaunted Afrika Korps. Indian troops staged successful defenses and counterattacks in both Malaya and Burma.<sup>126</sup> These local tactical successes were no compensation for the lack of an overarching campaign plan.

The Indian Army did learn a great deal from the costly defeats in 1941-42. Campaign planners set the stage in 1943 for the future reconquest of Burma. An Infantry Training School and two divisions converted wholly to training organizations ensured that units were fully prepared for jungle warfare.<sup>127</sup> Maj. Gen. Frank Messervy, former Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) in India, fought successfully to bring armor units to Burma and to have proper tank-infantry training to defeat Japanese field fortifications.<sup>128</sup> Indian units then held at Kohima and Imphal in 1944. When Slim launched his counteroffensive in Burma in 1944, the Indian formations dealt the enemy the worst defeat ever suffered by the Imperial Japanese Army.

#### Implications for the U.S. in a Post-Cold-War World

The experience of the Indian Army during 1940-42 suggests several potential pitfalls when considering the

ability to plan and execute two nearly-simultaneous MRCs. The strain caused by multiple deployments raises the elementary question of strategic overextension on the world stage. The end of the Cold War inaugurated a military drawdown of all services which is historically typical of Anglo-Saxon democracies upon the termination of any major conflict. Yet there has been no concomitant reduction in strategic commitments world wide, especially in Operations Other Than War (OOTW). American policy makers need to formulate a realistic policy of engagement commensurate with the military machine which the nation can afford.

The divisive discussion surrounding the U.S. government's Bottom Up Review (BUR) indicates concern over such overextension. However, the only agreement among CINCs to date is the genuine desire not to be the second MRC.<sup>129</sup>

The need for rapid world-wide deployment also raises the issue of accurate, timely intelligence of many varied, disparate areas. The end of the Cold War has greatly magnified the need for information data bases around the globe. The U.S. should strive to integrate strategic and operational intelligence as necessary to facilitate successful operations. Another concern is the availability of sufficient strategic lift to support two MRCs.

Campaign planning must continue nonetheless and staff officers can learn from the Indian Army experience. First, truly joint operations will obviously maximize available combat power.<sup>130</sup> In an age of austere budgets, the services

do not merely complement each other; they may have to substitute for one another as force structures continue to dwindle and redundancy disappears. Planners should also not rely on forces for a certain MRC for which they have less than first priority.

Second, Indian Army operations in 1940-42 demonstrated the need to deploy quality, trained forces on relatively short notice to fight a first-class foe. In such cases planners should maximize the use of available active army troops. The use of National Guard (NG) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units against a well-trained and equipped enemy is fraught with hazards. Such organizations lack the time to train and hence to produce highly-skilled and cohesive units at levels above battalion.

Reserve Component (RC) units are especially useful in two scenarios. One is OOTW situations where the level of threat is extremely low. The second is a general war in which the U.S. will have considerable time and needs to mobilize its vast manpower and industrial capacity to achieve victory, as in WW II. They represent more of a liability than an asset in any other scenario, especially given perceptions of public sensitivity over casualties.<sup>131</sup>

Third, the U.S. Army prides itself upon its versatility. Lack of same hurt Indian Army units hurriedly sent to Malaya and Burma to stem Japanese offensives. If the U.S. Army intends to maintain bona fide versatility, then all units require training in all environments. Versatility currently

focuses heavily on the ability to conduct both wartime missions and OOTW without due consideration of the complete realm of geography and weather.<sup>132</sup>

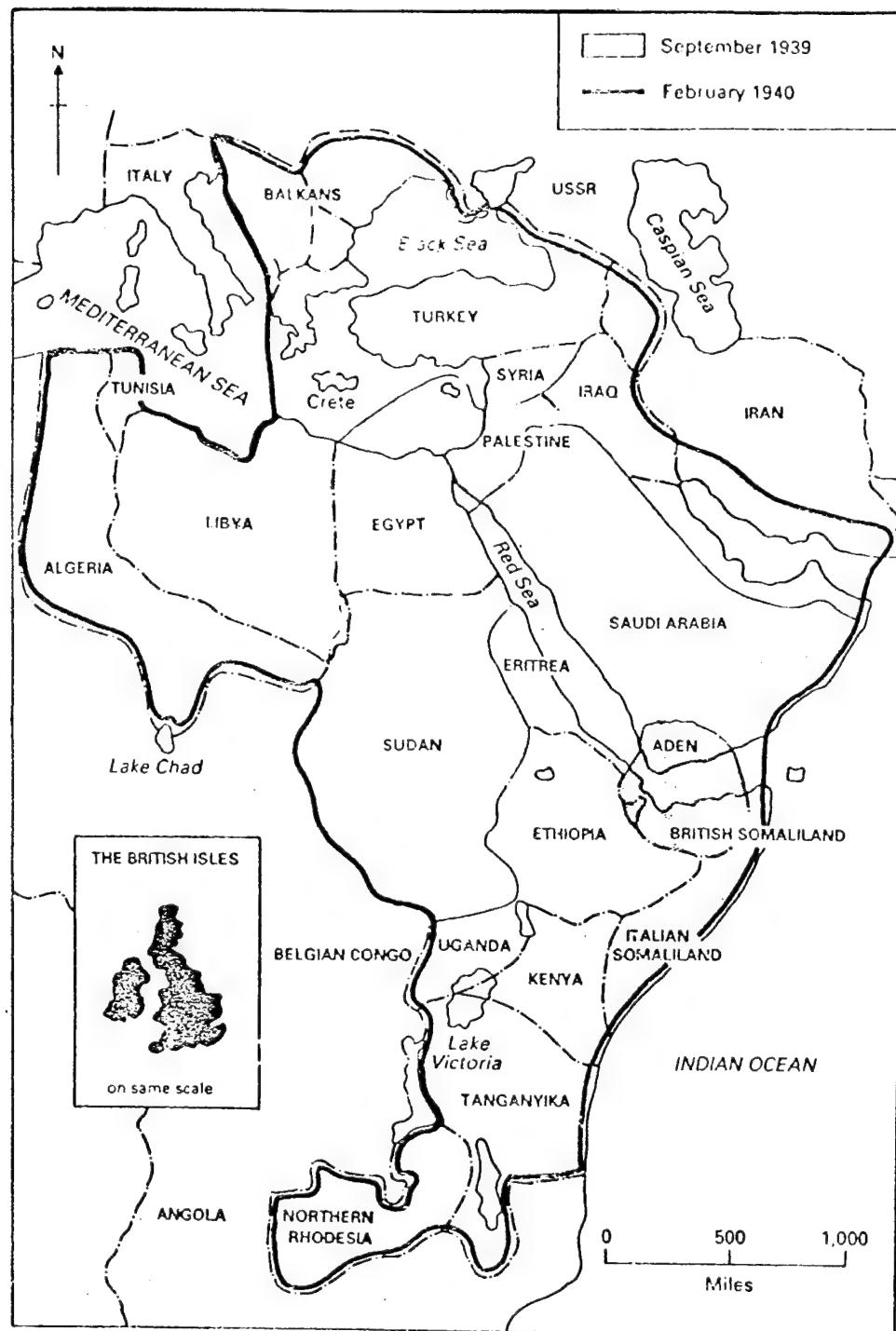
Fourth, future MRCs will likely be located in parts of the world with relatively undeveloped infrastructures and with severe terrain and weather challenges. Pre-planned operational logistics will be critical for success. Moreover, tactical forces will probably not be robust enough to compensate for a failure of operational logistics.

Fifth, current doctrine provides CINCs considerable flexibility in the precise arrangement of organizations to conduct an MRC. The experience of the Indian Army suggests that HQs lack adequate personnel to function as multi-level command and control organizations. The strain on staffs during crisis-action interventions further mitigates against excessive expectations of such simultaneous versatility.

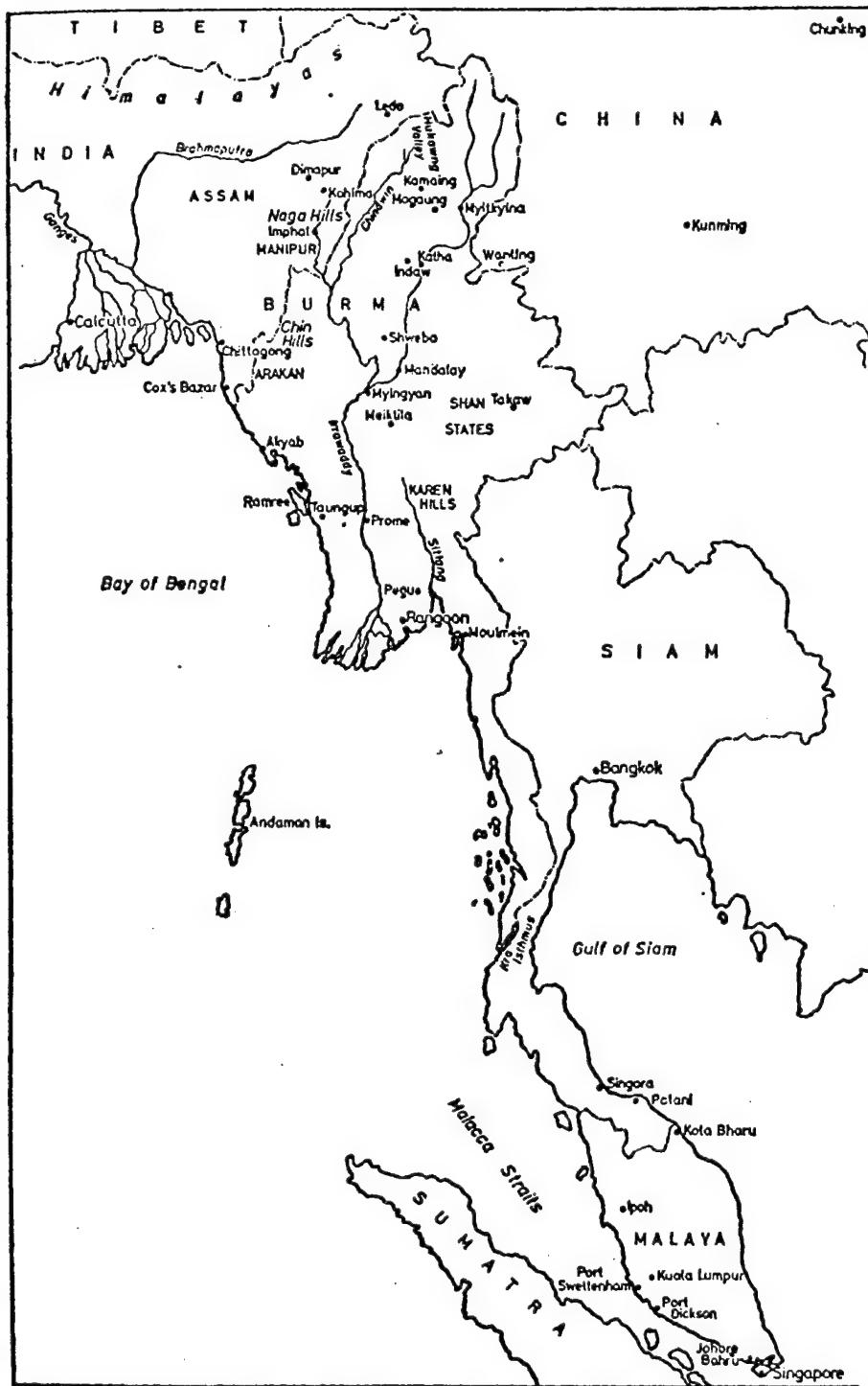
The experience of the Indian Army in conducting two MRCs between 1940-42 underlined the links between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Campaign planners at operational level played an especially crucial role in setting the stage for tactical success or failure. American planning staff officers can learn from that World War II experience. They will play a crucial role in the development of future courses of action to conduct two nearly-simultaneous MRCs. The U.S. can ill afford a fiasco similar to the Indian Army's second MRC in Burma in 1942.

MAP 1

MIDDLE EAST COMMAND (MEC) PRIOR TO CESSATION  
OF THE NEAR EAST TO C-IN-C, INDIA<sup>133</sup>



MAP 2

THE FAR EAST: INDIA, BURMA, AND MALAYA<sup>134</sup>

## APPENDIX 1

INDIAN ARMY PEACETIME CAMPAIGN PLANS, ca. 1920-39<sup>135</sup>

## A. Defence of India Plan (1927-29).

1. Formed the basic plan in force for most of the inter-war period.
2. Plan developed gradually through most of the 1920s, but mainly 1927-29.
3. Assumption. Flagrant Russian invasion of Afghanistan with Afghan cooperation.
4. Response. Operational offensive combined with a tactical defensive to eject the Soviets from Afghanistan's northern borders.

## B. Blue Plan (1927) and Pink Plan (1931).

1. Branches to the Defence of India Plan.
2. Considered hostile Afghan intentions and/or internal turmoil which necessitated intervention.

## C. Interim Plan of Operations, August 1938.

1. Replaced the Defence of India Plan.
2. In fact, differed only in minor details from its predecessor.

D. Plan of Operations (India), 1938.<sup>136</sup>

1. Simplified, less ambitious concept of operation which replaced the Interim Plan of Operations.
2. Strategic defensive with local offensives to restore a situation or relieve pressure along the NWF or in Afghanistan.
3. Remained in force until development of 1940 Plan A.

Note. All of these plans dealt strictly with operations on the NWF and Afghanistan.

APPENDIX 2  
INDIAN ARMY OVERSEAS  
CONTINGENCY PLANS AS OF 1939<sup>137</sup>

<u>Location</u>	<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Size</u>
Egypt	E, then HERON	2 brigades
Aden	A, then HAWK	1 battalion
Persian oilfields	P, then SPARROW	1 brigade
Singapore	M, then EMU	1 brigade
Burma	R, then WREN	1 brigade
Hong Kong	N/A	2 battalions
Taiping	N/A	1 battalion

Note. Half of the allocated battalion was in garrison at Aden by May 1939.

## APPENDIX 3

## INDIAN ARMY WARTIME COMMITMENTS, 1940-42

A. Plan A, established 1940.<sup>138</sup>

1. Mission. Support Afghanistan in the event of a Russian invasion.
2. Projected requirements: 5 infantry divisions, 1 armored division.
3. Committed units: Projected use of 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th Infantry Divisions, 31st Armored Division.

## B. Middle and Near East, 1940-42.

1. Mission.
  - a. Support British forces in Middle East (Egypt and Aden).
  - b. Assume operational responsibility for the Near East (Iraq, Iran, Syria).
2. Projected requirements: 3 brigades, i.e. 1 division, and 1 battalion. (See Appendix 2 above for more details.).
3. Committed units: 7 divisions, i.e. 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Infantry Divisions.

## C. Far East, 1940-42.

1. Mission. Support British forces in theater.
2. Projected requirements: 3 brigades, i.e. 1 division. (See Appendix 2 above for more details.)
3. Committed units: 3 divisions and 2 brigades, i.e. 9th, 11th, and 17th Infantry Divisions; 13th Infantry Brigade (part of 1st Burma Division); 2 battalions lost in Hong Kong, and 1 battalion withdrawn from Taiping.

## Notes

1. Of the 5 infantry divisions projected for use in Plan A, 3 went to the Near East (Iraq and Iran) and 1 to Malaya. The remaining unit, 7th Infantry Division, went to Burma in 1943.
2. The divisions committed to the Middle and Near East generally spent the duration of the war in theater and participated in the Italian campaign. One division, 5th Infantry Division, left for service in Burma.

## APPENDIX 4

COMMANDERS IN CHIEF, INDIA, 1920-42<sup>139</sup>

<u>Name</u>	<u>Assumption of Command Date</u>
Gen. Lord Rawlinson of Trent, GCB, GCVO, KCMG, ADC	21 Nov 1920
Field Marshal Sir William R. Birdwood, Bart., GCB, GCSI, GCVO, KCMG, CIE, DSO	6 Aug 1925
Field Marshal Sir Philip W. Chetwode, Bart., GCB, GCSI, KCMG, DSO	30 Nov 1930
Gen. Sir Robert A. Cassels, GCB, CSI, DSO	29 Nov 1935
Gen. Sir Claude J. E. Auchinleck, GCIE, CB, CSI, DSO, OBE	27 Jan 1941
Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, GCB, CMG, MC	11 Jul 1941
Gen. Sir Alan F. Hartley, KCIE, CB, DSO	17 Jan 1942
Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, GCB, CMG, MC	7 Mar 1942

## NOTES

Text

<sup>1</sup>Percival Spear, A History of India, Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1965; reprint ed., 1983), 106-8 *passim*.

<sup>2</sup>T. A. Heathcote, The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922, Historic Armies and Navies series, ed. Christopher (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1974), 201.

<sup>3</sup>Reserves added another 111,500 Indians. Heathcote, The Indian Army, 202.

<sup>4</sup>Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers, and Men (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 334-35.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Mason, The Men Who Ruled India (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 242-43.

<sup>6</sup>The Great Game consisted of the cold war waged between Britain and Russia over spheres of influence in the trans-Caucasus region, Afghanistan, and Persia (Iran).

<sup>7</sup>Heathcote, The Indian Army, 24-29 *passim*.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in Mason, A Matter of Honour, 375.

<sup>10</sup>The renumbering proceeded as simply as possible. Old Bengal units retained their old number. Bombay infantry added 100 to their former number; the cavalry, 30. Madras infantry added 60; cavalry, 25. This scheme integrated all of the various independent corps and frontier forces as well. See Heathcote, The Indian Army, 31-32.

<sup>11</sup>One was Peshawar and the Khyber with its lines of communications (LOC) Peshawar through Lucknow to Calcutta. The second was Quetta and Kandahar, with its LOC Quetta through Mhow to Bombay. Each echelon was titled an Army Command, Northern and Southern. Mason, A Matter of Honour, 398-99.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 401. The brigades contained four infantry battalions.

<sup>13</sup>For example, see James D. Scudieri, "The Indian Army and the Scramble for Africa," Soldiers of the Queen, Journal

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of the Victorian Military Society, no. 54 (September 1988): 7-10.

<sup>14</sup>Maj. Donovan Jackson, India's Army (London: Sampson, Low Marston & Co., 1940), 5.

<sup>15</sup>Byron Farwell, Armies of the Raj (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 248. Note that the Indian Army's artillery was almost exclusively British manned except for twelve mountain batteries, a legacy of the Mutiny.

<sup>16</sup>Mason, A Matter of Honour, 411.

<sup>17</sup>H. S. Bhati, ed., Military History of British India (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1977), 225.

<sup>18</sup>F. W. Perry, The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organization in Two World Wars (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 88-89, 96-97.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>20</sup>However, the perspective of C-in-C, India changed earlier. See below under the discussion of the World War II experience. Note that Lord Curzon as Viceroy at the turn of the century had created the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) separately from the Punjab to facilitate administration of this tumultuous area.

<sup>21</sup>Maj. Gen. J. G. Elliott, A Roll of Honour: The Story of the Indian Army, 1939-1945 (London: Cassell, [1965]), 14. The Chatfield Committee, named after Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield, met between November 1938-January 1939.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix 1, page 46 for a summary of these plans.

<sup>23</sup>The Viceroy himself, however, was technically bound by the orders of the British Cabinet in London.

<sup>24</sup>Great Britain, The British Library, India Office Library and Records Department, Military Department, "Plan for the Modernization of the Army (Operations), General Staff, India, 1939," File L/MIL/17/5/1804, pp. 15-20. The specific document is "Peace Locations and War Roles of Army in India after Re-organization." Note that all page numbers reference the entire file. This source is hereafter cited as India Office Library.

<sup>25</sup>Great Britain, India Office Library, "Memorandum on India's Defence Commitments," File WS3130-L/WS/1/292, PP. 19-20, 30.

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<sup>26</sup>See Charles Chenevix Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 1900-1947 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1988), 104-14 for a concise overview of operations.

<sup>27</sup>Perry, The Commonwealth Armies, 97.

<sup>28</sup>Anthony Clayton, The British Empire as a Superpower, 1919-39 (London: Macmillan Press, n.d.; reprint ed., Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 33.

<sup>29</sup>Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 134. The unit designation signifies 5th battalion, 14th Punjab Regiment.

<sup>30</sup>The Amritsar Massacre occurred in April 1919 in Punjab Province. Less than a company of troops faced a crowd variously estimated between 6-10,000. The soldiers opened a sustained fire, expending some 1,650 rounds within ten minutes and inflicting about 300 killed and 1,300 wounded.

<sup>31</sup>Clayton, The British Empire as a Superpower, 152. See pages 179-86 for a summary of specific operations.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 386.

<sup>33</sup>Bisheshwar Prasad, Defence of India: Policies and Plans, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45 (n.p.: Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1963), 53-54. An Indian infantry division contained three brigades of three battalions.

<sup>34</sup>Maj. P. C. Bharucha, The North African Campaign, 1940-1943, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.: Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1956), 30; Prasad, Defence of India, 54.

<sup>35</sup>Prasad, Defence of India, 54-55.

<sup>36</sup>Bharucha, The North African Campaign, 30-32. See Appendix 2, p. 47 for a summary of these commitments.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>38</sup>Great Britain, India Office Library, "1936 Discussions on India's Worst Deficiencies," File WS2947-L/WS/1/262, pp. 7-18, 28-36 passim. Britain gave India an annual grant of 1.5 million towards defense, but this sum was paltry.

<sup>39</sup>Infantry units habitually acquired additional automatic weapons when possible, especially late in the war.

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<sup>40</sup>Sri Nandan Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organization, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.: Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1956), 432-33.

<sup>41</sup>In other words, twelve versus thirty-six; British units on the Indian establishment were those assigned to India on a rotating basis. The Government of India paid their expenses.

<sup>42</sup>Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 135.

<sup>43</sup>Clayton, The British Empire as a Superpower, 297. Sri Nanson Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organization, 1939-45, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.: Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1956), 434 shows a detailed breakdown of the TO&E. American readers should note that British and Indian cavalry squadrons are company-sized units; troops, platoon-sized.

<sup>44</sup>Lt. Col. B. N. Majumdar, Short History of the Indian Army, Volume 2: Services (New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, n.d.), 124-25.

<sup>45</sup>Prasad, Defence of India, 60 and Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 135.

<sup>46</sup>Maj. Gautam Sharma, Indian Army through the Ages (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1966), 262-63.

<sup>47</sup>Several nominally autonomous Indian states existed on the subcontinent. They maintained their own defense establishment and offered their forces to serve the British Empire as a whole.

<sup>48</sup>Farwell, Armies of the Raj, 294-301; Sharma, Indian Army through the Ages, 262-66 *passim*.

<sup>49</sup>Clayton, The British Empire as a Superpower, 409-10.

<sup>50</sup>Farwell, Armies of the Raj, 300.

<sup>51</sup>Compton Mackenzie, Eastern Epic, Volume I, September 1939-March 1943: Defence (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951), 10.

<sup>52</sup>This organization was nearly identical to a British Motor Battalion, the infantry component of an armored division. They were usually composed only of the famous British rifle regiments, the Rifle Brigade and the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC).

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<sup>53</sup>These were the Universal Carrier which generally had a crew of four. Their popular designation was "Bren carrier."

<sup>54</sup>Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces, 435, 437-38. By August 1940 U.S. and Canadian trucks were available to Indian forces. Meanwhile, the Indian Army was dependent on inadequate British stocks. Great Britain, India Office Library, "Strategy to Be Employed in the Middle East," p. 46.

<sup>55</sup>Mackenzie, Eastern Epic, 34-84 *passim*.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>57</sup>Elliott, A Roll of Honour, 13.

<sup>58</sup>Geoffrey Evans, Slim as Military Commander, Military Commanders Series (London: B. T. Batsford & Princeton, NJ: D. van Nostrand, 1969), 47.

<sup>59</sup>MEC included Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Syria, British Somaliland (Somalia), Kenya, British East Africa (Uganda), Aden, and the rest of the Persian Gulf. See Map 1, p. 44.

<sup>60</sup>Maj. K. J. Macksey, MC, Beda Fomm: The Classic Victory, Ballantine's Illustrated History of the Violent Century, battle book no. 22 (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 25.

<sup>61</sup>The Italians divided Libya administratively into Tripolitania along the border with French Algeria and Tunisia, and Cyrenaica along the Egyptian border.

<sup>62</sup>C-in-C, Middle East assumed temporary operational control of Iraq in May 1941. Maj. Harold E. Raugh, Wavell in the Middle East, 1939-1941: A Study in Generalship (London: Brassey's, 1993), 212.

<sup>63</sup>Great Britain, India Office Library, "Operations: Middle East-HERRING, TROUT, RAINBOW, File WS1447-L/WS/1/121, p. 163.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>65</sup>Prasad, Defence of India, 122-31 *passim*.

<sup>66</sup>Read as 7th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment.

<sup>67</sup>British practice maintained independent service CINCs within a theater of operations. The British Official History refers to them as a "triumverate arrangement." Maj.

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Gen. I. S. O. Playfair et al., The War in the Mediterranean, Vol. 1, The Early Successes against Italy, History of the Second World War Series (London: HMSO, 19), 33.

<sup>68</sup>Lt. Col. James G. Bierwirth, "Beda Fomm: An Operational Analysis" (MMAS thesis, USAC&GSC, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1994), 110-11.

<sup>69</sup>Lt. Gen. Richard O'Connor war diary cited in Ronald Lewin, The Chief: Field Marshal Lord Wavell, Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy, 1939-1947 (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 69-70.

<sup>70</sup>[Walter George Hingston], The Tiger Strikes (n.p.: Director of Public Relations, Govt. of India, 1942), 68-69; Lt. Col. G. R. Stevens, Fourth Indian Division ([Toronto]: Maclarens & Son, n.d.), 44, 51.

<sup>71</sup>Mackenzie, Eastern Epic, 85-88.

<sup>72</sup>Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 159.

<sup>73</sup>The reader should note that this figure constitutes 70 percent of the current (1995) U.S. Army active division strength.

<sup>74</sup>F. W. Perry, Armies of the Commonwealth, Pt. 3B, (n.p.: 1988), 255.

<sup>75</sup>Frontier operations were classic small wars. A column built around an infantry brigade with a regiment of cavalry plus support was considered a large assembly of troops.

<sup>76</sup>See Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces, 55-65 for greater detail.

<sup>77</sup>Perry, Armies of the Commonwealth, 255-66.

<sup>78</sup>Lt. Col. G. R. Stevens, Fourth Indian Division ([Toronto]: Maclarens & Son, n.d.), 10-11.

<sup>79</sup>Mackenzie, Eastern Epic, 92.

<sup>80</sup>Perry, The Commonwealth Armies, 107.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 108-9. Significantly, both 4th and 5th Indian Divisions largely avoided the milking experience.

<sup>82</sup>Mason, A Matter of Honour, 324-25, 345, 348-61 passim.

<sup>83</sup>Sharma, Indian Army through the Ages, 246-47.

<sup>84</sup>Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces, 88.

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<sup>85</sup>This strict segregation became less during the course of the war, but mostly outside the combat arms.

<sup>86</sup>Many veteran officers were in fact trilingual. They added Pushtu, the most common tongue among the Frontier tribes and Afghanistan, though it had several dialects.

<sup>87</sup>Bryan Perrett, Tank Tracks to Rangoon: The Story of British Armour in Burma (London: Robert Hale, 1978; paperback ed., 1992), 25-27 and Brig. Sir John Smyth, Bt., VC, MC, MP, The Only Enemy: An Autobiography (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1959), 46-62. Smyth served as a subaltern in the 15th (Ludhiana) Sikhs.

<sup>88</sup>Clayton, The British Empire as a Superpower, 37.

<sup>89</sup>See Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces, 99-100, 102-4 for more specific details.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 181-83.

<sup>91</sup>Perry, Armies of the Commonwealth, 255, 263-66. The 39th was formed from the survivors of the First Burma Campaign in 1st Burma Division.

<sup>92</sup>Map 2, p. 45, shows the Far Eastern theater.

<sup>93</sup>Prasad, Defence of India, 141-42, 145, 148-49.

<sup>94</sup>Raymond Callahan, The Worst Disaster: The Fall of Singapore (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1979), 29. Callahan's work is excellent and highly recommended.

<sup>95</sup>F. H. Hinsley, et al., British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations, Vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1979), 23-24.

<sup>96</sup>K. D. Bhargava and K. N. V. Sastra, Campaigns in South East Asia, 1941-42, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.: Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1960), 5, 8, 13.

<sup>97</sup>Maj. Gen. C. M. Maltby decided to implement the original plan which called for a forward defense on the mainland along the fortified Gin Drinkers Line. His decision rested upon the unexpected arrival of two Canadian battalions who increased his forces by 50 percent, from four to six battalions. He thus placed three battalions into the Line even though the plan had specified the need for a full division. Oliver Lindsay, The Lasting Honour: The Fall of

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Hong Kong, 1941 ([London]: Hamish Hamilton, 1978; paperback ed., London: Sphere Books, 1980), 20-21.

98 Great Britain, India Office Library, "Liability of India to Supply Reinforcements Outside India," File WS2258-L/WS/1/180, p. 23-24.

99 Bhargava and Sastra, Campaigns in South East Asia, 93-118.

100 Arthur Swinson, Defeat in Malaya: The Fall of Singapore, Ballantine's Illustrated History of World War II, campaign book, no. 5 (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969) is a frank and highly readable account of this debacle.

101 Lewin, The Chief, 153.

102 Viscount William Joseph Slim, Defeat into Victory (London: Cassell & Co., 1956; paperback ed., London: Papermac, 1986), 10-11.

103 Lewin, The Chief, 157.

104 Alfred Draper, Dawns Like Thunder: The Retreat from Burma (London: Leo Cooper, 1987), 1-10 passim.

105 Great Britain, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Army Historical Branch, "Report on a Visit to Burma by Captain T. M. H. Pardoe, The Worcestershire Regiment, February 8th-April 8th, 1941," File WO32/3655, pp. 1-22 passim. These files are extracts from the Public Record Office (PRO) collection and hereafter cited as MoD (PRO).

106 Great Britain, MoD (PRO), "India Political and Military Situation," File WO32/3651, p. 85a. The specific document is "Note on Security of India and Burma."

107 Great Britain, India Office Library, "Burma Monthly Intelligence Summaries, 1939-41," File WS1154-L/WS/1/96.

108 Maj. Gen. S. Woodburn Kirby *et al.*, The War against Japan, Vol. 2: India's Most Dangerous Hour, History of the Second World War Series (London: HMSO, 1958), 11.

109 Great Britain, India Office Library, "Defence Schemes. Rangoon Oil Refineries," File WS3040-L/WS/1/277, pp. 2-3, 6, 32.

110 Great Britain, India Office Library, "HQ, Army in Burma. Progress Reports," File WS2496-L/WS/1/261, p. 3.

111 Evans, Slim as Military Commander, 65.

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<sup>112</sup>S. C. Gupta, History of the Indian Air Force, 1933-  
45. Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the  
 Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.:  
 Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1961), 74-75.

<sup>113</sup>Bisheshwar Prasad, ed., The Retreat from Burma, 1941-  
42, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the  
 Second World War, 1939-45, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (n.p.:  
 Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1954), 159-60.

<sup>114</sup>Alan K. Lathrop, "The Employment of Chinese  
 Nationalist Troops in the First Burma Campaign," Journal of  
Southeast Asian Studies 12 (September 1981):407-8.

<sup>115</sup>Hugh Tinker, "A Forgotten Long March: The Indian  
 Exodus from Burma, 1942," Journal of Southeast Asia Studies  
 6 (1975):2, 4 has estimated about 400-450,000 who left  
 overland, 70,000 by sea, and some 4800 by air with 10-50,000  
 more who died in the attempt.

<sup>116</sup>Smyth, The Only Enemy, 182-83, 186, 192-93.

<sup>117</sup>Evans, Slim as Military Commander, 220 estimated that  
 the disaster reduced the 17th Indian Division to 41 percent  
 of their authorized infantry complement. Well under half  
 were still armed.

<sup>118</sup>He was physically a sick man and should not have been  
 on active service. His treatment by senior officers is an  
 issue beyond the scope of the monograph.

<sup>119</sup>Slim, Defeat into Victory, 27-28, 30.

<sup>120</sup>See the summary of the scope of Indian Army  
 commitment in Appendix 3, p. 48.

<sup>121</sup>Charles Chevenix Trench, The Frontier Scouts (n.p.:  
 Jonathan Cape, 1985; paperback ed., Oxford: Oxford  
 University Press, 1986) describes these operations.

<sup>122</sup>A more detailed examination of archival material may  
 possibly reveal otherwise.

<sup>123</sup>Great Britain, India Office Library, "Strategy to Be  
 Employed in the Middle East," File WS1447A-L/WS/1/122, p.  
 46.

<sup>124</sup>However, a new army code introduced in 1937 was  
 difficult to break. Hinsley, British Intelligence in the  
Second World War, Strategy and Operations, vol. 1, 52-53.

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125 Col. Masanobu Tsuji, Japan's Greatest Victory, Britain's Greatest Defeat, ed. H. V. Howe, trans. Margaret E. Lake (paperback ed., New York: Sarpedon, 1993), 3-10.

126 The principal tactical problem was the unnerving Japanese ability to outflank roadbound Allied units crosscountry and cut off their LOC.

127 The two units were 14th and 39th Indian Divisions. Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces, 72.

128 Henry Maule, Spearhead General: The Epic Story of General Frank Messervy and His Men in Eritrea, North Africa, and Burma (London: Odhams Press, 1961), 213-15. Messervy commanded 4th Indian Division in Africa and 7th Indian Division in Burma.

129 The CGSC policy of non-attribution precludes the ability to document specific individuals.

130 These observations apply to both war and OOTW.

131 Whether or not the public is sensitive to American casualties is irrelevant to the present discussion. The perception has clearly influenced American military policy.

132 Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations, June 1993 (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 1993), 2-9. The manual clearly encompasses all aspects of versatility.

#### Maps

133 Raugh, Wavell in the Middle East, 41.

134 Callahan, Burma, 1942-1945, 31.

#### Appendices

135 Prasad, Defence of India, 22-41.

136 Great Britain, India Office Library, "Defence Schemes. Plan of Operations (India), 1938, Part I-Plan," File WS1583-L/WS/1/129, p. 25.

137 Great Britain, India Office Library, "Liability of India to Supply Reinforcements Outside India," File WS2258-L/WS/1/180, pp. 6, 18-19, 73.

138 Prasad, Defence of India, 56-60.

139 Bhati, Military History of British India, 247.

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